

Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

June 2003
Volume 4, Issue 3

Questions/Comments:
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Empowerment's Legislative Update

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision:

**Every child,
beginning at birth,
will be healthy and
successful.**

July 10th – Early Care, Health and Education Symposium Update

We are thrilled with the response for the July 10th training. As of the middle of May we were full and have created a waiting list.

Thanks for the interest!

The 2003 session ended Thursday, May 1. However, lawmakers were called back for a special session that began on May 29, 2003.

Empowerment Related Legislation:

Early Childhood Grants. *House File 667*, the Health and Human Services Appropriation Bill, increased funding for Empowerment Early Childhood grants by \$1 million, for a total of \$7,350,000.

School Ready Grants. *House File 662*, the Education Appropriations Bill, appropriates \$13,724,712 to the school ready account for fiscal year 04. That is the same amount as last year (FY 03). The bill goes on to direct how the funds should be distributed:
"Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, beginning July 1, 2003, the community empowerment office, established as a division of the department of management, shall use the documentation created by the legislative fiscal bureau to implement a four-year phase-in period of the distribution formula approved by the community empowerment board."

This is a bit different than the recommendation put forth by the Iowa Empowerment Board. It extends the phase-in period to remain at each level of phase-in for two years rather than one. So, fy 04 and fy 05, would be at the level where no community loses more than 25%; fy 06 and 07 would be at the level where no community loses more than 50%; then fy 08 would move to total formula funding statewide.

Healthy Iowans Tobacco Trust (HITT). *House File 685.* In fiscal years 02 and 03 \$1,153,250 from HITT was appropriated to the school ready grant account. That amount was increased for fiscal year 04 to \$2,153,250.

That brings the total school ready fiscal year 04 appropriation to \$15,877,962, which is \$1 million more than fiscal year 03, and the funds will be distributed to all areas using the phase-in formula described in the Education Appropriations bill.

REMEMBER--the Governor has to sign the bills before it's a done deal.

When all bills are finalized each Community Empowerment Area will be notified of their fiscal year 04 grant amounts by the Office of Empowerment.

Empowerment Legislative Update – Cont.

Something new....

Standings/Salary Bill. Senate File 458 included the following language:

47 26 Sec. 103. Section 28.9, subsection 2, Code 2003, is 47 27 amended to read as follows: 47 28 2. a. A school ready children grants account is created 47 29 in the Iowa empowerment fund under the authority of the 47 30 director of the department of education. Moneys credited to 47 31 the account shall be distributed by the department of 47 32 education in the form of grants to community empowerment areas 47 33 pursuant to criteria established by the Iowa board in 47 34 accordance with law. 47 35 b. The distribution formula utilized by the Iowa board for 48 1 school ready children grants in the fiscal year beginning July 48 2 1, 2004, and for each succeeding fiscal year, shall 48 3 specifically incorporate the following components: 48 4 (1) A minimum statewide performance baseline shall be 48 5 established for the core indicators of performance identified 48 6 pursuant to section 28.8, subsection 1, paragraph "a". 48 7 (2) A community empowerment area must maintain its 48 8 designated status in good standing and must have received 48 9 continued approval of its school ready children grant plan. 48 10 (3) The community empowerment area must identify how the 48 11 core indicators of performance will be addressed by the area 48 12 and select two or more of the core indicators that will 48 13 achieve a minimum percentage of improvement identified by the 48 14 area, subject to approval by the Iowa board. The community 48 15 empowerment area's data for the calendar year preceding the 48 16 year in which the area initially received a school ready 48 17 children grant shall be used as the area's baseline year. 48 18 (4) If an area achieves the identified percentage level of 48 19 improvement in the preceding calendar year, the area's minimum 48 20 grant amount shall be the annualized grant amount received in 48 21 the area's initial year of funding. The Iowa board may 48 22 implement provisions for averaging the performance levels over 48 23 two or more years and other approaches to apply the 48 24 requirements of this paragraph "b" in an equitable manner. 48 25 (5) If an area does not achieve the identified percentage 48 26 level of improvement in the preceding calendar year, the area 48 27 shall receive a reduction from the area's minimum grant 48 28 amount. If the identified percentage level of improvement is 48 29 achieved in the next succeeding calendar year, the area's 48 30 minimum grant amount shall be restored.

Update: On Friday, May 30, the Governor took action on Senate File 458. He used a line item veto to strike Section 103. The Governor's letter said, "This section places sanctions based on the performance, or lack of performance, on outcomes for young children. This appears to set the stage for increased pressure of inappropriate assessment of young children as well as unrealistic expectations on Community Empowerment Areas to show a percent of improvement. In addition, the language regarding penalties by a reduction in funds for not meeting an established percent improvement does not support the purpose or intent of Community Empowerment."

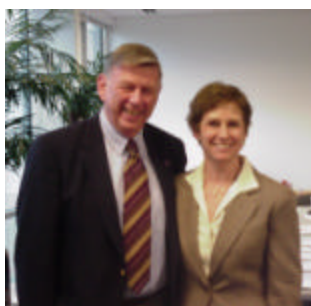
Membership Changes to the Iowa Empowerment Board

Pictured from left to right: Kevin Concannon, Ruth White, and Mike Bergan.



*Board Chair Nancy VanMilligen
with Clemmye Jackson.*

*Board Chair Nancy Van
Milligen with Bob Koob.*



April 4th marked the end of tenure for some Iowa Empowerment Board members. Former chair, Bob Koob and Clemmye Jackson both said farewell to the board. We appreciate their time, efforts, knowledge and expertise.

New members to the board are: Director of Department of Human Services, Kevin Concannon, Director of the Department of Human Rights, Ruth White, Winneshiek County Board of Supervisor, Mike Bergan and State Senator Jack Holveck. We also look forward to having the Director of Public Health, Mary Mincer-Hansen join the board.

The Iowa Empowerment Board continues to meet quarterly and is currently working on their leadership agenda and strategies and action plans.

If you know someone who would be interested in serving on the Iowa Empowerment Board, please send a letter of nomination from the Community Empowerment Board to the Appointments Coordinator in the Governor's Office.

The vacancies for citizen members are appointed by Governor Vilsack based on recommendations from community empowerment boards. Please contact the Empowerment Office if you need more information.

Administrative Report –

April 2003 – May 2003

July Board Meeting and Related Activities

The next Iowa Empowerment Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 11. It was decided by the Board at the April meeting to set the time of the meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with coffee and rolls available from 8:00-8:30. Many Board members will already be in Des Moines to attend the Early Care, Health and Education Symposium on July 10 and/or dinner with Smart Start staff the evening of July 10. All these activities will take place at the 4 Points Sheraton on Army Post Road. Smart Start staff will be helping Community Empowerment celebrate its fifth birthday at the July 11 meeting.

Iowa Department of Public Health Grant Opportunity

In March, the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Grant application was submitted for approval. Health Department representatives provided information about the grant at the January IEB meeting. We are still waiting to hear if our grant award is approved.

Early Care, Health and Education Congress

The dates will be November 18-19, at the Scheman Center in Ames, Iowa. A main focus will be on economic growth around early childhood issues. – Mildred Warner, a well-known economist will make a keynote address as will Joan Lombardi, National Institute for Early Education Research, and Kim Ellis from the Ruby Payne organization.

IEB Leadership Agenda Sub-Groups

Advocacy Leadership Subgroup – May 20

Achieving Results Leadership Subgroup – June 3

Collaboration Leadership Subgroup – June 3

Administrative Report – Continued

Smart Start Activities

- Planning Meetings with Grant Coach, Leslie Anderson, April 14 and 15
- Planning Meeting Conference Call, May 21

Site Visits/Technical Assistance Activities

- Warren technical assistance, April 2
- Jefferson, Keokuk Conference Call, April 15
- Lee/Van Buren Retreat, April 24
- Winnebago technical assistance, April 25
- Polk County technical assistance, April 30
- SW Iowa Regional Meeting, May 6
- Jefferson/Keokuk Board Meeting, May 20
- Lee/Van Buren technical assistance, May 20
- Lee/Van Buren technical assistance, May 27
- Empowerment Contacts/Coordinators Meeting, May 28

Linkages/Outreach Activities

- DHS Child Care Bureau, April 2, 16, May 7
- Child Care Resource and Referral Meeting, April 16
- Performance Measures Group, April 4, 18
- DCAT Training on Performance Contracts, April 18
- Governance Advisory Group, April 22, May 27
- Congress Planning Committee, April 24, May 22
- Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Conference, April 28-29
- Region VII Head Start and CC Leadership Conference, April 30-May 2
- Child Care Advisory Council – Tiered Childcare Systems, May 5
- Deveraux Early Childhood Assessment Training (Cedar Falls), May 6
- Child Care Resource and Referral Conference and presentation, May 8 and 9
- Head Start in Marshalltown visit and tour, May 14
- Accountable Government Act Information presented to Child Care Resource and Referral Directors, May 15
- Early ACCESS Council, May 16
- Fiscal Accountability Workgroup, May 19
- (Pat McReynolds) – Family/Parent Support Networking, May 21
- School Ready Assessment Team, May 22
- TEACH/Apprenticeship, May 29
- HOPES HFI State Advisory Committee, February 25
- Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, (CJJP),

Linn County Wins 2003 Counties Care for Kids Award

Department of Health and Human Service Secretary Tommy Thompson has announced the creation of the Su Familia National Hispanic Family Health Helpline (866-783-2645 / 866-SU-FAMILIA). Su Familia will help Hispanic families get basic health information to help them prevent and manage chronic conditions, and refer them to local health providers and federally supported programs including the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

The toll-free help line is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time. Additional information about the Su Familia program is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2003pres/20030312.html>

Washington, D.C. – Linn County's (Iowa) Child Development Center/Community Empowerment Program received a 2003 Counties Care for Kids Award by the National Association of Counties (NACo). The award program, part of a year-long initiative launched by NACo President Kenneth A. Mayfield, seeks to highlight the critical role counties play in early childhood development and school readiness.

"Counties across the nation have and will continue to take the lead in developing early childhood programs," said NACo President Kenneth A. Mayfield. "Linn County's Child Development Center/Community Empowerment Program deserves to be especially recognized for its tremendous work and innovative ideas in caring for our nation's children and families," he continued.

This year, eight county programs and one county supervisor were honored at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. on April 8, 2003 during National Government Week. They include Cuyahoga County's (Ohio) Early Childhood Initiative, Georgetown County's (S.C.) First Steps Program, Fairfax County's (Va.) Healthy Families Program, Hamilton County's (Ohio) Every Child Succeeds Program, Hillsborough County's (Fla.) Early Head Start/Head Start Program, Linn County's (Iowa) Childhood Development Center/Community Empowerment Program, Oakland County's (Mich.) Healthy Start/Healthy Families Program, Olmsted County's (Minn.) Baby Steps Program and Los Angeles County (Calif.) Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is a full-service organization that provides legislative, research, technical and public affairs assistance to county governments. Created in 1935, NACo continues to ensure that the nation's 3,066 counties are heard and understood in the White House and Congress.

YOU ARE INVITED!

To: Community Empowerment Area Board Members

What: Community Empowerment Board Member Training

When: September 10, 2003 – Cedar Rapids Area

September 11, 2003 – Atlantic Area

9:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Details:

- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- What Can you Learn about Quality
- Lessons Learned from Smart Start

Partners in Training

- Head Start Association
- North Carolina's Smart Start Initiative

Meet Iowa Empowerment Board Member Mary Odell



Iowa native Mary Odell joined the State Empowerment board in the summer of 2002. She came to the board as a way to show her commitment to the children and families in the state of Iowa. Her position as state-wide coordinator for early childhood programs at Lutheran Social Service of Iowa brings front-line experience to the board. She is currently working on one of the service teams as LSS and Bremwood integrate into the new Lutheran Services in Iowa.

Mary received her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing and has worked in a variety of public health and social service areas in the past 25 years. She is currently pursuing a master of organizational leadership degree from St. Ambrose University. She has been active as a local volunteer with numerous organizations and boards including League of Women Voters, ISU Extension, Muscatine Library Board of Trustees, Muscatine Health Association and Muscatine County CARES (Child Abuse Prevention Council.) She has served on the Muscatine County Empowerment Board in the past and continues to serve on the Cedar County Empowerment Board.

As a parent of four children, two of which were special needs adoptions, Mary and her husband of twenty five years have as their vision to Think Globally, but Act Locally. Mary looks forward to her continued involvement on the State Empowerment Board.

T.E.A.C.H.Ò Scholarships Available in Iowa

Iowa Early Care Health and Education Congress

**November 18-19, 2003
Scheman Center, Ames**

An Economic Growth approach to issues/workshops will be one focus for this year's event. Economist, Dr. Mildred Warner has been confirmed as a keynote presenter. Joan Lombardi will be another featured keynote.

As more details are determined, we will pass the information along.

The Iowa Child Care and Early Education NetWork is pleased to announce the availability of scholarship tuition assistance for fall semester, 2003, for early care and education providers to earn college credit following the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project model. The scholarships will support C.D.A./A.A./A.S./A.A.S degree requirements in early childhood education, covering up to 80% of tuition costs for nine to fifteen credit hours per year at a participating Iowa community college, stipends for books and travel expenses, and support release time or substitute expenses for the child care program. Recipients MUST be currently employed thirty hours per week or more in a licensed center or a registered child development home. All participants will sign a contract making a commitment to remain in their sponsoring program for a minimum of 12 months following the contract period. Sponsoring child care centers and programs also agree to support the participant. Participants will receive a raise or a bonus after fulfilling each annual contract. Participants in registered Child Care Apprenticeship programs are encouraged to apply for this scholarship funding. Each region of the state has a minimum of ten scholarships available, to be awarded to both licensed center/preschool staff and registered child development home providers.

T.E.A.C.H.® scholarships are funded with public/private partnerships, in part through the Iowa Department of Human Services with federal funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant Quality improvement initiative.

It is anticipated that the applications will be available on or about June 1, 2003. To request an application, please put your name on the list by contacting Barb Merrill, Apprenticeship/T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project Director, Iowa Child Care and Early Education NetWork, 218 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1021, Des Moines, Iowa, 50309. Email your request including name, address, email, and telephone to bmerrill@iowachildnetwork.org, or call (515) 883-1206. Information and an application form will then be forwarded to you as soon as available.

Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health Aug. 14 & 15

Upcoming Events

Iowa Empowerment Board

July 11, 2003
October 3, 2003

State Advisory Council Meeting Schedule

July 9, 2003
(this is a change of date!)

Contact/Coordinator Meeting Schedule

September 24, 2003
Urbandale Library
(this is a change of
date!)

Mark Your Calendars!!

**Iowa Empowerment
Board Training Day**
September 10, 2003 –
Cedar Rapids Area
OR
September 11, 2003 –
Atlantic Area

Early Care, Health and Education Congress

November 18-19, 2003
Scheman Center, Ames

Mark your calendars for the *Governor's Conference on Public Health: Leading the Charge for Community Health*, also known as Barn Raising IV, on August 14 and 15, 2003, at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. The biennial conference brings together cutting-edge experts from several health care arenas. The purpose is to:

- expand participants' knowledge,
- introduce new tools and resources, and
- share successful program models through workshops and networking.

This conference is targeting those who work in the health fields or who recognize the vital importance of the health sector to the stability and economic security of their communities.

Although planning is still underway, at this initial stage, speakers who have agreed to keynote the conference include the following:

- Ed Thompson, M.D., deputy director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Irwin Redlener, MD, President of the Children's Health Fund and CEO of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore; and
- Martin Collis, PhD., exercise physiologist and motivational speaker

Among the list of outstanding workshop presenters are Tyler Norris of Community Initiatives, "Addressing the Forces of Change in a Community;" Jonathan Kotch, MD, MPH, University of North Carolina, "Strategies for Healthy Child Care;" and Scott Raeker, Institute for Character Development, "Building a Community of Character – A Community That Supports its Schools and Health Services."

The conference is divided into two tracks: *Tools for Leaders*, and *Leading the Charge in Healthy People/Healthy Iowans 2010: The Overarching Goals*. Topics include access to health care; mental, physical, and sexual health issues; confined animal feeding operations; bioterrorism, as well as many other topics pertinent to today's health care advocates. Altogether, more than 30 different sessions are being planned.

Continuing education units will be available for conference attendees. Training sessions for Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Adult Abuse will also be offered for an additional fee.

Conference conveners are the Office of the Governor Thomas J. Vilsack, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Sally J. Pederson, the Iowa Department of Public Health and Drake University. The major financial sponsor is The Wellmark Foundation.

Continuing education credits, registration, poster sessions, displays, lodging, speakers, and the conference brochure will be posted on www.idph.state.ia.us. Double click on conferences.

For other questions, contact Louise Lex, Ph.D., Iowa Department of Public Health, by phone: 515-281-4348 or e-mail: llex@idph.state.ia.us.

Please Note: Meeting Date Change for September Contacts Meeting

We are changing the September Empowerment Contacts/Coordinators Meeting from the 10th to **September 24th**.

This meeting will be held at the Urbandale Library, 3520 86th Street.

Iowa Empowerment Board's Leadership Agenda for FY 2004



During its April meeting, the Iowa Empowerment Board reviewed and updated its Leadership Agenda (strategic plan). The Board will focus on three goal areas: Achieving Results, Collaboration and Advocacy.

The board will take on a broader perspective of the entire early care, health and education system. New members will be recruited who can serve as champions and leaders. The board will continue to identify action steps at the July board meeting with the help of Karen Ponder, Executive Director, North Carolina Partnerships for Children, who will describe to the Board Members how the activities of the North Carolina Partnership for Children Board have been successful in North Carolina.

IOWA EMPOWERMENT BOARD LEADERSHIP AGENDA FY 2004		
<i>Iowa's Early Care, Health and Education System Vision: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.</i>		
Empowerment Results	Mission Statement	Guiding Principles
Empowerment Communities will develop the capacity and commitment to achieving the results of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Children Children Ready to Succeed in School Safe and Supportive Communities Secure and Nurturing Families Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments 	The Iowa Empowerment Board supports communities by demonstrating and facilitating leadership and collaboration to achieve desired results for children (0-5) and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual respect and trust Flexibility Results-focused Best Practices/Research Based Creative/Innovative Partnerships Accountability
Goals		
Achieving Desired Results	Collaboration	Advocacy
<i>The Iowa Empowerment Board will empower Iowans and their communities to achieve desired results to improve the quality of life for children (0-5) and their families.</i>	<i>The Iowa Empowerment Board, public and private organizations and communities develop collaborations to build an interdependent system for children (0-5) and their families.</i>	<i>The Iowa Empowerment Board will lead policy development and build public engagement for support for Early Childhood and Early Learning for children (0-5) and their families.</i>
Strategies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best practice and evidence- or research-based activities Support Iowa's goals to achieve results for Early Childhood Support comprehensive community asset-based assessment and planning Enhance linkages that support children and families Support flexibility and innovation to maximize efficient utilization of assets and resources Build a comprehensive, integrated system for children (0-5) and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Iowa's efforts to integrate early care, health and education systems Encourage private as well as public involvement in the development of an Early Childhood System Enable and empower local citizens to lead collaborative efforts Foster partnerships at and between all levels for shared accountability toward Iowa's vision Enhance state and community public and private partnerships through innovative approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the focus on Iowa's vision and Empowerment's results Increase corporate and foundation involvement and investment in support of quality Early Childhood experiences Serve as champions for adequate financial support and resources in Iowa for quality environments for early childhood Seek and listen to input from communities on their experiences toward Iowa's vision and reaching results Increase public engagement to support the importance of Early Childhood and Early Learning experiences

New Resource for Parents! Helping Children Excel in School

Source: The Achiever, May 1, 2003, Vol.2, No.8

Parents wanting to know more about how they can help their children excel in school can find the answers to those frequently asked questions in a new publication, "Questions Parents Ask About Schools." In 16 reader-friendly pages, this booklet provides research-based tips that cover a range of topics for parents or caregivers with elementary and middle school children, including:

- preparing your child for school;
- knowing what to expect from your child's kindergarten teacher;
- monitoring school work;
- working with schools and teachers effectively;
- helping your child with reading and homework; and
- ensuring that your child's school is safe and drug free.

This text is available in both English and Spanish and is available online at www.ed.gov/Family/agbts/Questions

For a paper copy, please call the Department of Education's publications center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS with identification number EKH0124P, while supplies last. One order per customer please.

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision: Every Child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.

Local Story: Little Elf Preschool

(article submitted by Jeanette Randall)



The School Ready work group of Buchanan, Delaware, Fayette Empowerment and ISU Extension sponsored extensive evaluations for six preschool centers in the BDF area. A condition of the evaluations was that teachers would be sent to trainings that focused on areas of weakness and, the centers would receive \$700 in grant dollars to purchase materials to help strengthen their programs.

As a result of the evaluations, recommendations were made for training in music, science and diversity. ISU will conduct another evaluation to follow up on the impact of the additional training and materials at these centers.

Said Sister Benjamin, Director of Little Elf Preschool in Oelwein: "Elf teachers have gained so much from the three training sessions. There is a renewed excitement about teaching and the children have really enjoyed the new equipment. We are all experiencing "hands on" learning. It is fun for the children...and they love playing the musical instruments."



"Elf has benefited so much from its involvement with Empowerment. We are looking forward to the opportunities we will have in the future."

From Lucille and David Packard Foundation, clips from *Future of Children, Fast Facts*

- One recent study found that the United States spends \$600 per year per preschool-aged child on early childhood care and education, whereas France spends five times that amount (nearly \$3,000), and Sweden spends seven-and-one-half times that amount (more than \$4,500). (Spring/Summer 2001)
- In 1999, close to one-third of families receiving federal welfare benefits had children under age three, 12% had infants, and 21% had children between age one and two. (Spring/Summer 2001)
- When mothers are working, 27% of infants and toddlers are regularly with their fathers, 27% are with relatives, 22% attend child care centers, 17% go to family child care homes, and 7% are with nannies. (Spring/Summer 2001)
- 61% of mothers with children under age three were employed in 2000, compared with just 34% in 1975. (Spring/Summer 2001)
- Social scientists estimate that between 3.3 million and 10 million children in the United States witness domestic violence each year. (Winter 1999)



Other Events and Activities

Risky Business Conference

May 6, 2003,
Scheman Building, ISU,
Ames Iowa.
Presented by Community Youth and Family Development Branch of Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. For questions about registration process, workshop content, etc., call YSS at 515-233-3141.
www.yss.ames.ia.us/riskybusiness/

The Governor's Conference on Public Health – Barn Raising IV
August 14-15, 2003
Drake University,
Des Moines
www.idph.state.ia.us

Iowa AEYC State Conference
October 10-11, 2003
Polk County Convention Complex, Des Moines

2004 National Smart Start Conference
Building Brighter Futures
January 25-28, 2004
Greensboro, NC
www.ncsmartstart.org

New Outreach Tool Available from Covering Kids and Families

Covering Kids and Families (CKF) now has a new outreach tool available to families. The Family Education Packet has been designed in response to research that demonstrated a need for families to learn about the value and concept of health insurance. Information in the packet includes: What is Health Insurance; Health Care Coverage Glossary; List of Health Insurance Providers; Insurance Options Chart; What Insurance Can Buy You; and Tips to Using Health Insurance. This packet is designed for outreach to families through schools, and can be made available to families in a variety of ways. Some of the ways to provide the packet to families include: display in school office; provide at parent/teacher conferences; make available at PTA or other parent meetings; display at extracurricular events; or provide at any event which brings families into the schools.

The Family Education Packet can be found on the Covering Kids and Families Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/coveringkids by clicking on the helpful resources link. You can also contact Beth Jones at bjones@idph.state.ia.us or 1-800-383-3826 for additional information.

6-Month Waiting Period for *hawk-i* Eliminated!

House File 49 passed this legislative session that eliminates the 6-month waiting period! With this new legislation, the *hawk-i* program can approve an application in cases in which prior employer-sponsored coverage ended less than six months prior to determination of eligibility for the program.

Benefits for Beginners!

(article submitted by Nola Aalberts and Ann Bowman)

Links to Empowerment Web sites

State: www.empowerment.state.ia.us

Benton County -- NEW!

www.bcempowerment.com

Buchanan Delaware Fayette:

www.bdfempowerment.org

Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth Sioux:

www.northwestiowa.org

Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell:

www.fmccom.org

HAWC (Howard, Allamakee,

Winnebago):

www.HAWC-Iowa.com

Hardin <http://www.empowerhardin.com/>

Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright

www.buildingfamilies.net

Jasper:

<http://www.jaspercountypowerment.org/>

Linn:

www.linnempowerment.homestead.com/homepage.html

Marshall:

www.youthandviolence.org

Pocahontas, Calhoun and

Webster:

www.linking-families.com

Polk:

www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org

Scott:

www.scottcountypowerment.org/

Story:

<http://www.storycountyfamily.org>

Washington:

www.empowerwashington.org

Woodbury:

www.siouxlandship.org

Send us your web site address and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

Anyone who has ever worked with children knows how rewarding it is to witness each one grow physically, mentally and emotionally. Knowing that you are a central part in a child's developmental process gives you a special feeling of pride and accomplishment. Because the work of a caregiver is so challenging, the time has come for them to be reaching for quality and rewarded for that in a whole new way! Benefits for Beginners is a project funded by Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment in response to a critical need for quality child care in Lyon, Sioux, Plymouth, and Cherokee Counties. It is designed to recognize and reward current accomplishments as well as encourage the providers to set and attain additional goals for themselves. The provider will be able to choose from a variety of goals and accomplishments that will allow them to earn points.

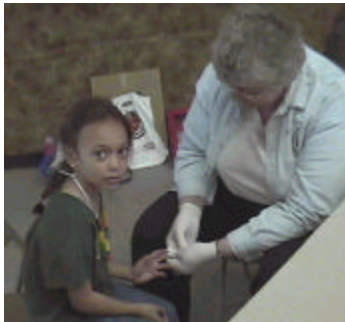
There are five areas in which to earn these points through Benefits for Beginners. These areas include: Training, site visits (whether it be by the Development Specialist, Home Consultant, Health Consultant, PITS Specialist), child care provided (what ages they serve whether it be infants on up or 2 years of age on up), expanding services (overnight or weekend care), and professional accomplishments (contract, daily log to record happenings during the day, newsletter, current immunization information on the kids). Benefits for Beginners provides incentives to caregivers when they attend training sessions, improve the health and safety of their child care program, complete accreditation, join the food program, and/or participate in an environmental rating scale. With the points they earn, caregivers are able to redeem them for safety or health kits, high chairs, safety gates, cribs, infant climbers or mats, playground equipment, and a variety of developmentally appropriate toys.

Also, focus is placed on recruiting and assisting new caregivers as they enter the field. These providers submit an application for the Infant/Toddler Grant. This grant can be used to purchase items to help get their infant and toddler program up and running. All existing registered caregivers in Lyon, Sioux, Plymouth, and Cherokee counties are encouraged to participate and continue to improve the quality of their child care programs.

This program has grown tremendously since it was begun in January of 2000. We now serve over 160 providers in the four county regions. We have helped many providers and centers receive quality equipment and quality training opportunities to improve the quality of care. Some of the comments that providers are saying are the following: "Where else can you get free items doing what you love doing each day?" "All the things I do to earn points helps me understand children and their needs better!" "Great chance to get new toys to replace the old or broken toys!" "It's very helpful for providers who can't afford new stuff!"

Ida County Holds Health Fair

(Article submitted by Jan Burk)



The Ida County Empowerment office hosted a Health and Safety Fair on Thursday, April 10th. This was the 2nd Health and Safety fair hosted by the empowerment area. Attendance doubled from the first year as 200 people attended. The purpose of the event is to help the community become aware of services available to families and children in Ida County. “We want to let the community know that there are a variety of services available to enhance the health and safety of children in Ida County,” says Jan Burk, Empowerment Community Services Coordinator.

Organizations participating in the event included:

- Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc. – Mid-Sioux conducted lead screenings for children to determine if lead was a risk in their household. Deb Meyer, Outreach Coordinator, assisted families with information regarding Mid-Sioux’s services.
- Iowa State University Extension – 4-H Counsel helped with age appropriate games and they presented information on health and nutrition, poison control and DOT car seat safety information.
- Iowa Highway Patrol – bike safety
- Ida County Police – child safety identification fingerprints
- Pocket preschool – Enrollment information for 2, 3, and 4 year olds
- Horn Clowns – Face Painting
- Jackson Recovery – Cute Pie Contest and information on keeping our children drug-free
- Horn Memorial Hospital – hand washing instructions and farm safety information
- Child Health Specialty Clinics – macaroni necklaces and health information
- State Farm Insurance – Photo with bear, a 911 simulator and other safety tips
- Ida County Public Health – Information on immunizations
- Gingerbread Preschool – a coloring table and information on registration for 3 & 4 year olds.
- Western Hills AEA 12 – Information on developmental skills and age-appropriate behavior
- Little Pirate Preschool – frog headbands and information about the preschool
- Tattoo – the wall on anti-smoking information.

Numerous volunteers helped to make the day a success. Donated items were given away as door prizes. There was a “Cutie Pie Contest” held for area children sponsored by Jackson Recovery. There were a total of 36 entries. All who participated were considered winners. The Ida Grove 4-H counsel helped with age appropriate games and the Holstein Library hosted a Kids Story Corner and displayed Leap Pads and books donated by Empowerment Funds.

For more information about the Health and Safety Fair, contact Jan Burke at 712/364-4271.

Training Opportunities from ISU Extension

"Cultural Perspectives on Parenting"

Local site registrations are now being accepted for the national satellite series, "Cultural Perspectives on Parenting" <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/culture/index.html> produced by Iowa State University Extension.

Dates: October 23 and November 13, 2003

Times: (Central Time)

1:30 - 2:00pm (Local Site Activities)

2:00 - 4:00 pm (Uplink)

4:00 - 4:30 pm (Local Site Activities)

Contact your local Cooperative Extension Office to partner to bring this series to your community. Individuals interested in downlinking the series can find the site registration form at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/culture/inside/register.html>

Target audience: professionals/volunteers who work with parents and their families.

NOTE: A new video, "Parenting Your Teen" featuring Dr. Laurence Steinberg, and a one page publication "10 Tips for Parenting Teens" is available for \$20 from Iowa State University Extension. This video and publication were created as follow-up educational materials from the "Healthy Teen Development" national satellite series held October 2002. You can view a clip of the video and obtain ordering information at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/teen/inside/purchasing_video.htm

For more information, contact:

Kimberly Greder

Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Studies

Family Life Extension State Specialist

Iowa State University

kgreder@iastate.edu

515-294-5906

Partnering with Parents: Walking the Journey Together

This comprehensive training series for parenting educators will be offered in two locations

Fall 2003: Des Moines and Council Bluffs/Atlantic (the series will held in both sites)

Spring 2004: the series will be offered in Waterloo

For more information: www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp

Location: Council Bluffs and Atlantic

Contact: Mary Hughes

Family Life Field Specialist

mhughes@iastate.edu; 712-366-7070

Location: Central Iowa

Des Moines (Polk County Extension Office)

5201 NE 14th Street, Suite A

Des Moines, IA 50313

Contact: Sharon Mays

Family Life Field Specialist

smays@iastate.edu 515 263-2660

Location: Waterloo

Donna Andrusyk, Family Life Field Specialist

andrusyk@iastate.edu (319) 882-4275

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision: Every Child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.

Successful Child Fair – Buchanan, County

(Article Submitted by Jeanette Randall)



Members of the Parent Education Work Group in the Buchanan, Delaware, Fayette Empowerment Area sponsored Early Childhood Fairs in Delaware and Fayette Counties and joined with the Community Health Safety Fair in Buchanan County. The purpose of the fair was to provide information to parents about parenting, nutrition, literacy, safety as well as information on other community/family resources and to have children friendly experiences for the day.

Annette Hyde, Keystone AEA and chair of the Parent Education work group, reported telling Fair participants to plan activities and handouts for approximately 100 attendees due to the fact this was a new initiative. The planning group included representatives from Keystone AEA, Regional Medical Center/Parents as Teachers, Parent Share and Support/Parents as Teachers, Buchanan County Volunteer Coop, ISU Extension, Kindermusik, and Operation: New View Community Action. Booth sponsors were not only those on the planning committee but included area day cares and pre schools, Child Care Resource & Referral, Banks and credit unions, Dairy Promoters and Pork Producers, Dental Association, law enforcement, libraries, to name a few.

Much to the surprise of the work group, over 500 attended the Fair in Delaware County. Booth participants ran out of materials, over 180 books were given away at the Book Walk. Over 350 people attended the Fair in Fayette County with more than 100 books distributed at their Book Walk. The hands on activities prompted families to linger, socialize and be entertained by Mr. Nick, the balloon man, dancers, police cars and fire trucks.

The Work Group has received a grant from BDF Empowerment to begin work for a second annual child fair for April 2004.



This article was submitted by Kerry Moore Kroneman, Project Director, Iowa Early Care & Education Professional Development Project

The Iowa Early Care & Education Professional Development Project (IECEPDP) is working to develop a statewide professional development system for all individuals caring for Iowa's children. This system will serve as a link for practitioners to find professional development that meets their needs and improves their skills in working with young children, thereby improving the quality of all child care.

Ultimately, the implementation of a comprehensive professional development system will enhance children's healthy growth and development and strengthen families, by increasing the quality of care available throughout the state.

Research has identified practitioner level of education and training, specific to child development and early childhood, as being the most important factor in reaching high quality care. In order to assess the impact of changes to the system, baseline information describing current child care practitioners (center staff and family child care providers) and programs in Iowa needed to be collected. IECEPDP contracted with Iowa State University and ISU Extension, CD-DIAL, to develop surveys to collect this information. In the future, these surveys can be replicated to assess the changes that have been implemented and to identify improvements in the quality of care.

IECEPDP has completed the second phase of its survey of child care in Iowa. The first phase of the survey focused on center based programs in Iowa and the second phase focused on family child care providers in child development homes. These surveys were used to collect information primarily on the wages, benefits, education, training, and demographics of the individuals who care for Iowa's children.

The second phase surveys were sent to 1,855 family child care providers and 730 surveys were returned (return rate ~ 40%). Responses came from 95 out of the 99 counties. It should be noted that because Iowa does not require registration or licensing of child care providers, there is NO comprehensive list of all individuals providing child care in their homes. A list was created with assistance from the CCR&R provider list and DHS list of non-registered providers receiving state subsidy (the list was not inclusive of all providers). Responses were analyzed and details are available on our website at www.iaeceprofdev.org under *Publications*.

Analysis of the data indicated that family child care providers could be divided into 2 distinct categories, career providers and non-career providers. Significant differences exist between the 2 categories of providers in Iowa. In general, career providers view their work as a profession or career, are more likely to be registered with the state, indicating a willingness to receive health and safety monitoring, have higher levels of education, are more likely to have participated in training related to early care and education, and provide family child care for shorter lengths of time.

Non-career providers (on average) view their work as temporary and/or are looking for a different occupation, are less likely to be registered, indicating a lower willingness to participate in health and safety monitoring, have completed fewer years of education, are less likely to have participated in training designed to improve the quality of care, and provide family child care for longer periods of time.

***Iowa Early Care &
Education Professional
Development Project -
continued***

These results suggest significant concerns and challenges for Iowa as it seeks to establish a corps of professional, career-oriented providers who offer high quality, accessible child care. If Iowa's best educated providers tend to leave the profession earlier than those with lower education, how will the state maintain a workforce of career-orientated child care providers in the future? If non-career providers are less likely to be registered and less likely to participate in training, how will the state ensure that all children are in settings that help them enter school ready to learn?

Early care and education professionals and practitioners, child advocates, parents, legislators, and other state officials who are concerned about Iowa's children and the quality of their early experiences must address these issues. Their challenge is to use the information gathered in these surveys to begin planning a process that will improve the quality of early learning experiences for all children in all child care settings.

Ninety-nine percent of the providers were female, 85% were married or living with a partner, 93% were Caucasian, and the average age they reported was 39.5. The average number of people living in their homes was 3.8 and 75% of providers have children under the age of 18 living in their homes, 21% had children under the age of 2.

Seventy-three percent of the providers report caring for 6 or more children and 19% report caring for children with special needs. Ninety-seven percent of providers have at least a high school diploma or GED and 38% reported having some college credits. Sixty-six of the providers reported receiving child care related training in the last 12 months and 8% have taken college courses in the last 12 months.

In Iowa, family child care providers earn an average of \$14,709 annually and they report an average of \$9,450 in expenses to operate their child care business, with 77% of providers reporting household incomes of less than \$50,000. Eighty-four percent of providers reported another adult contributed to the household income. These same providers indicated that 50% of them had some type of employer provided insurance through their spouse/partner, 26% had a personal insurance policy, 23% had no insurance coverage, and 8% had no insurance coverage for their dependent children.

(Iowa Family Child Care Provider's Survey, Iowa Early Care & Education Professional Development Project & Iowa State University Extension, CD-DIAL, January, 2003)

